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Letter dated 17 July 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999, I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 May 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. Over the reporting period (1 to 31 May 2001) there were approximately 46,500 troops of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in theatre, with no major changes in deployment since the last report.

2. KFOR's main activities during the month of May related to the return of the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the last remaining sector of the Ground Safety Zone (GSZ), reinforcement of its presence along the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,[1] anti-smuggling and prevention of criminal and illegal border activities and dealing with residual protests against the excise and sales tax collection policy of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

3. The number of refugees making their way into Kosovo in May was 19,282, of which 10,987 came from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and 8,295 from the Presevo Valley. One thousand three hundred refugees had returned to the Presevo Valley by the end of May.

Security

4. During the reporting period, the level of inter-ethnic violence continued across the province but at a reduced level. In Vitina, on 1 May, a Kosovar Serb and a Kosovar Albanian were shot from a passing car; the Kosovar Serb later died. On 8 May a Kosovar Serb was shot and seriously wounded in a suspected inter-ethnic murder attempt. In the last year, the Kosovar Serb population of Vitina has fallen by 60 per cent due to ethnic harassment. On 11 May, in Vitez, schoolchildren demonstrated peacefully against violence committed recently against the Kosovar Serb community.

5. KFOR continued to support UNMIK in the restoration of law and order. On 18 May, KFOR and UNMIK police carried out a joint search operation against a security firm[2] (called Jaguar) in Pec, which resulted in the arrest of 26 people and the confiscation of large amounts of weapons, documents and computer hardware and software. An investigation to determine any involvement of members of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in this company is continuing.

6. In Mitrovica and the surrounding area, Kosovar Serbs continued to show their dissatisfaction with the implementation of UNMIK's excise and sales tax collection policy by blocking roads and through small-scale demonstrations. Although freedom of movement had been achieved for KFOR at the end of April, restrictions on access by UNMIK police continued until the third week in May. An agreement reached between UNMIK tax experts and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Labus, on 23 May, is expected to finally resolve difficulties surrounding the establishment of this excise and sales tax.

[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

[2] UNMIK police, who are responsible for issuing operating licences to companies providing security services, began closing down unauthorized security service providers on 18 May.

7. KFOR also dealt with small-scale incidents in the town, including the rescue of a Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officer, who was assaulted and wounded by several Kosovar Serbs, and the eviction of a Kosovar Albanian from "Little Bosnia", who was suspected of involvement in a shooting incident. In addition, KFOR and UNMIK continued to work together on confidence-building measures by extending the "Confidence Zone" and on several multi-ethnic projects relating to establishing sports and cultural centres and a multi-ethnic market.

8. The weapons destruction programme, as previously reported, is scheduled to begin again on 11 June once the necessary repairs to the furnace are completed. The total number of weapons destroyed had reached 5,300 by 31 May. Only four weapons were destroyed during the reporting period, with the backlog currently standing at 971. Weapons surrendered by Ethnic Albanian Armed Groups to KFOR prior to the entry of the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into Sector B of the GSZ will also be destroyed under this programme.

Return of the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the Ground Safety Zone

9. Exchanges of fire continued in the Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) in the lead-up to the due date for the return of forces to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the remaining sector, and included heavy and prolonged fighting on 11 and 12 May in the area of Oraovica in the Presevo Valley. Although KFOR forces came under fire more than once at the beginning of the reporting period, there were no casualties. The conditional and controlled return of FRY forces into Sector B began on 24 May and continued according to plan. The main difficulties encountered were mines and improvised explosive devices. The mined areas were marked and forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are expected to clear them by 20 June. KFOR's two-phase policy of detaining, screening and releasing members of the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) before and after the 24 May deadline resulted in a total 523 turning themselves in by the end of the reporting period, of which 480 were released, 10 remained to be screened and 33 were in detention. UCPMB members also delivered significant amounts of weapons and ammunition to KFOR. A prominent UCPMB commander (Lleshi) of the Veliki Trnovac/Breznica faction was shot dead, apparently accidentally, by Serb forces and, despite fears of retaliation, his funeral took place on 25 May without incident.

Illegal border activity

10. KFOR forces continue to provide appropriate control of Kosovo's internal boundaries, external borders and recognized crossing points. On several occasions, KFOR successfully intercepted smugglers and others illegally crossing from Albania into Kosovo.

11. KFOR significantly increased its presence along the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to interdict the movement of personnel and weapons into the northern part of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where fighting between government forces and the "National Liberation Army" (NLA) continued. On 30 May near Vitina, 10 NLA fighters were detained.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1160 (1998)

12. Although KFOR operations continue to result in weapons seizures there have been no reported violations of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

13. The Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) establishment, as at 31 May, stood at 4,663 members, of which 132 belonged to minority groups. Over the reporting period, the number of cases of non-compliance reported decreased in comparison to April from 13 to 5, all for minor offences. Cases of KPC members suspected of involvement in the activities of Ethnic Albanian Armed Groups in the Presevo Valley and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were also reported. On 9 May, the Commander of KFOR (COMKFOR) promulgated a directive, "KFOR and KPC — Partners for the Future",[3] setting out guidelines for the future relationship between KPC and KFOR, with the focus on KPC attitudes and perceptions. KPC continued to carry out a variety of humanitarian projects throughout the province, including house repairs, road construction, street cleaning and refuse collection.

14. Security forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remain in general compliance with the terms of the Military Technical Agreement.

Cooperation with international organizations

15. KFOR continues to provide daily assistance to international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout Kosovo, on request, and to provide security assistance in support of UNMIK police operations.

Outlook

16. Although the security situation in Kosovo continues to be affected by the violence in the northern part of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which has increased the risk to KFOR personnel, the situation throughout Kosovo is generally calm following the return of the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the GSZ and the voluntary laying down of weapons by a significant number of UCPMB members.

[3] COMKFOR directive 035.